On the Delusion of Transference of the Turkish Language into English

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Abstract: Although the scientific study of meaning, at the theoretical level, was not considered a worthy effort in the first three quarters of the twentieth century, in the last quarter century many linguists have come to the firm conclusion that any linguistic work would be incomplete and insufficient without reference to the meaning aspect of language. When English and Turkish languages are considered in the context of syntax and semantics, after the first scholarly sources about this topic were prepared concerning the “Dolaylı Tümleç” (indirect object) of Turkey Turkish, an error was made when the terminology was transferred from English (inspired by the term “Indirect Object” of English). This is the main subject of my article. This research study has two dimensions: English and Turkish. The examples in Turkish and English supporting this assertion will be considered and discussed together.

Key words: Comparison • Adjective • Adverb • Definit object • Complement • Syntax

INTRODUCTION

Although the scientific study of meaning, at the theoretical level, was not considered a worthy effort in the first three quarters of the twentieth century, in the last quarter century many linguists have come to the firm conclusion that any linguistic work would incomplete and insufficient without reference to the meaning aspect of language. Human language is natural in sense that it is a natural outcome of human endeavor to communicate, free from social and psychological pressures or concerns. Language also changes through time. It never remains static. A point should be made regarding the naturalness and changeability of language. The similiary works were done by [1-6].

When English and Turkish languages are considered in the context of syntax and semantics, after the first scholarly sources about this topic were prepared concerning the “Dolaylı Tümleç” (indirect object) of Turkey Turkish, a linguistic error occurred when the terminology was transferred from English (inspired by the term “Indirect Object” of English). This is the main subject of my article. This research study has two dimensions: English and Turkish. The examples in Turkish and English supporting this assertion will be considered and discussed together.

An adverb in Turkish completes the predicate of sentence from the viewpoint of place, time, aspect, reason, result and similar subjects and meaning. It is defined in the Dictionary of Turkish Language Association, “an adverb which affects the meaning of an adjective or adverb, in the concepts of time, place, quality and quantity and question” [7].

If a sentence in Turkish is viewed from the perspective of syntax and is separated into its component parts, the adverb group excluding the subject, object and verb is called “Complement/Tümleç”. This term was transferred from the English term “to complete” and it became Turkish. This transference occurred because, during the First Turkish Language General Assembly that Atatürk attended (1923), many novelties were included in the new language in order for Turkish to be formed into a written language. One of the novelties was to derive new scientific words and terms suitable to the structure of Turkish language by making use of Western language terminology.

The term “Complement/Tümleç” may have been derived from “to complement” in English, or with the scientific approach devoted to the core principles of Turkish, it may have been derived from a consideration of the function of adverbs in sentences. This may be the case because the function of adverbs in sentences is to integrate the meaning of the predicate and to qualify and describe. According to both comments, the term “complement” is understandable in Turkish and when explaining related issues upon

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which this research is based, this term will be mentioned often. It can still be said, however, that the other elements of the Turkish sentence named as object, verb, etc., have Arabic origins.

Should it be an “indirect object/dolayılı nesne”, or “indirect complement/dolayılı tümleç” or should it be called as a “human object”? The term “object” is described in several resources: “It is every kind of entity that has a weight, colour, volume and matter”; “every item except the subject”; “complement which is in the plain form and it denotes and complements the intransitive verb” (Dictionary of Turkish Language Association) [7].

The term “place adscititious” denotes the element which shows the place and its direction. It occurs in the form of the dative, locative, or ablative cases. If we pay attention, the scientist Ergin (2003:395) compares some descriptions of the object and we find that there is a little dilemma and this dilemma supports the findings at the core of this research. If the object is everything except the subject, the complement of the verb may not be mentioned as another element of the sentence. If we call the element which is present in a sentence that contains a transitive verb and is expressed with a predicate as an object, it can be said that the expression “Complement/Tümleç” should not be used in this description. Although it could be described as a qualified noun/belirtili nesne according to the description of Ergin and/or a “determination addition” by the definition in the Turkish Language Association internet dictionary, it may not be correct to use the term “complement” because the meaning of “complement/tümleç” according to Turkish and English is certainly a group of adverbs [8]. So, it should never be used in any description which has an expression of “complement/ tümleç” for an element which complements transitive verbs. For this reason, the definition “Indirect Complement/Dolayılı Tümleç” should not be used.

**DISCUSSION**

The examples in this research were investigated in accordance with the rules of English, so we will emphasize the following ideas by Ergin who expresses syntax and the constancy of the rules of Turkish syntax:

“According to the syntax of Turkish, helping elements appear before the main elements in a sentence. The whole construction of Turkish syntax was built on that law. All word groups and the primary syntactical element appears at the end and the item which denotes and complements (the helping factor) appears at the beginning. The element most focused upon to be shown (clarify) stands the closest to the verb” [8].

If these ideas are expanded upon, the verb appears at the end of a sentence. The adverb which complements the verb, which we call complement group/tümleç grubu, is placed before the verb or before the element the we focus upon and it changes its position according to the importance of the thing we want to express. The subject is placed at the beginning of the sentence and the object takes its position either closer to the subject or the verb in the sentence dependent upon its importance in the particular situation. This dispersal is expressed in more absolute terms in English. If it is expressed in the scope of a plain sentence, the subject is at the beginning, the verbs and the factors related to the conjugation of the verbs come after, the object or objects follow and the group of the complement appears at the end. The adverbs which form the complement do not take place in a sentence and they do not even pass to a place where there is an object. Because of this rule, the English language does not encounter any disorder regarding this syntactical concept when English is investigated from the viewpoint of linguistics or giving the names to the elements according to their function in the sentences. So much that, when it is needed, the sub-elements of English can change their position, but these changes are limited as long as they are within their borders. No language is the same in the world but there exist some similarities, because the human brain which considers the language is the fundamentally similar in all human beings [9]. According to the scholar George Yule, the rules of sentagma of the elements in English and Turkey Turkish sentences can show some differences to some extent in some situations. But a passive sentence in Turkish has more specific rules from the viewpoint of sentagma of the elements in the sentence than English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher gave</th>
<th>Me</th>
<th>A book</th>
<th>In his room last week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Object</td>
<td>Direct Object</td>
<td>Complement</td>
<td>Adverb Group: Adverb of place, Adverb of time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: In the light of the aforementioned explanations, we return to the core arguments of this research.
If we translate according to Turkish Grammar Rules:
Öğretmen verdi bana bir kitap odasında geçen hafta
Öğretmen verdi bana bir kitap odasında geçen hafta

Öğretmen odasında bana geçen hafta bir kitap verdi

indefinite object

In this sentence, the place of the elements which enter into the adverb group are changed and the thing to be emphasized is expressed in different ways, therefore changing its position in the sentence. Even though these changes are made, the form of “bana/ me” is not changed, so it clearly shows how Turkish is a language which follows specific rules. So, is the expression “bana/ me” expressed as the indirect object, or may it be an object? This thesis can be defended by the fact that “bir kitap/ a book” has the function of an indefinite object in the examples above and even if we change its position in the sentence, it does not have another function other than being the indefinite object.

Öğretmen geçen hafta odasında bana kitabı verdi

definite object

Öğretmen kitabını geçen hafta odasında verdi

definite object

If we consider this topic from a perspective of linguistics, Noam Chomsky states [10]:

“All the languages in the world are formed with a universal grammar. Every baby is born with an innate knowledge of grammar. The grammar is said to be innate, it was codified into the genes in the brain and nerves structures. If the language has a biological origin, what is its relationship with the brain and thought?”.

Whatever country a person is from, man’s brain has the same structure and natural predisposition regarding linguistics, so the expression “bana/me” (shown above) is an object and according to this research it is called an “object” in Turkish. The expression “me” does not take an orientation addition or similar aspect additions, but in the Turkish language of Turkey, as most linguists say there is an “-e, -a” in the meaning of orientation addition. And new research was developed against that idea also and according to it there also is an orientation aspect addition in English. But even if it is so, the name of the so-called element is an object; it is not considered being from an adverb group and it is not called as “Complement/ Tümleç”. More clearly, it is never called as “Indirect complement” in consideration of “Indirect Complement/Delaylı Tümleç” in Turkish Turkish. In other words, considering the observance of the rule that the element that should be emphasized must take place closer to the verb, the “preposition” is used in English sentences to denote a direction. But considering that it took a preposition as an orientation addition and changed its position in the sentence, we can not avoid calling that element an “object” because it took place in the “complement group”. Contrarily, this delusion is still going on in Turkey Turkish.

Table 2: Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher gave</th>
<th>A book</th>
<th>To me</th>
<th>In his room last week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Object</td>
<td>Indirect Object</td>
<td>Complement</td>
<td>Adverb Group: Adverb of place, Adverb of time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correct Turkish translation of this sentence is the same too.

Öğretmen geçen hafta odasında bana bir kitap verdi.

So, that is to say that the “bana” expression of Indirect Complement/ Dolaylı Tümleç, can be in the form of “bana-bene-ben” according to some living dialects/accents in places where Turkish is spoken and it is an expression originating from a noun. If we consider that this expression did not pass into written form, but that it was derived from
minds which created the Turkish language and considered according to the theory of Chomsky [10] as “beni” (not “bana”), it can be called a “definite object” supposition. The example above is the original version of local Turkish dialects which is spoken in cities and regions of Turkey such as Adana, Mersin, Konya. In these areas it can be expressed at times as “Öğretmen genç hafta odasında beni bir kitap verdi”. In this situation, the expression “beni” did not take the orientation addition (-a, -e) and it took an addition of a definitive object (-i, -i).

If the first linguists who transcribed spoken Turkish into written form knew this situation, they might not call the expression “bana” as “dolaylı tümleç/indirect complement”. A similar example supporting this contention can be given from a Turkish language - Kyrgyz Turkish:

Men ötkör Cuma muallimge bir belek berdim. Men tüm muallimdi universitette kordum.

These sentences are very similar to Turkey Turkish from the perspective of meaning and verb conjugation. The only difference is in the discourse which is the topic of phonetics. The determining additions (-ga, -ge) in the above examples are not separated in Kyrgyz language (-ga) as orientation additions and (-g) as determination addition. But today the Turkish and Kyrgyz lecturers who teach Turkey Turkish in Kyrgyzstan Turkey Mamas University and in Kazakhstan at Ahmet Yesevi University comment and explain these additions according to the sources of Turkish linguistics. They have made a great effort to eradicate this so-called delusion and convey it in the Turkistan geography.

Table 3: We demonstrate the aforementioned forms in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Öğretmen</th>
<th>Geçen hafta</th>
<th>Bana</th>
<th>Odasında</th>
<th>Bir kitap</th>
<th>Verdi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>time complement</td>
<td>Indirect complement,</td>
<td>Place complement,</td>
<td>Indefinite object</td>
<td>Predicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-adverb complement</td>
<td>(other name is not given)</td>
<td>-adverb complement,</td>
<td>-adverb of place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-adverb of time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we examine its English counterpart and it is analyzed in the context of syntax, the element “bana” is not a “Indirect Complement/ Dolaylı Tümleç”. A conclusion may be reached that it can be considered in a group of objects and may be given a new linguistic name. This new terminology should be considered for the following reason: In order for one element of a sentence to be included into a group of complements, that element must be either in the group of adverbs and must qualify the predicate of the sentence, or it must take place in the adverbs in the sentence (when considered in terms of syntax) and complement the meaning of the verb.

In the sentence above, last week/geçen hafta is an adverb. It is in the complement group and it has been called an adverb of time or time complement. Oda contains an adverb and it is in the complement group and it has been called an adverb of place or a place complement. If it is considered from the perspective of semantics, it is called either an adverb of time or an adverb complement.

In the mind of a person who learns this “idea” well in Turkish, this expression denotes the time and it is called either an adverb of time or time complement and it complements the meaning of the predicate from the viewpoint of meaning. Because of this function it can be called as an adverb or adverb complement. On the other hand, in an expression that denotes place, it can be called an adverb of place complementing the predicate from the perspective of meaning. Denoting the place, it can be also called as a place complement. All of these types of expressions contribute to the terminological richness of the modern Turkish language. All of them have a variety of meanings and both young and old people can understand the meanings easily. However, as it has been demonstrated above, adverbs have names that are subject to the burden of meaning, so the expression has additionally received the name of “Dolaylı tümleç/Indirect Complement”. So, a question should appear in the head of a person who learned Turkish at a proficient level and investigated it in the context of linguistics according to the ideas that I have explained. And this question is the foundation of my study. Why? The answer is very clear. If we call an element which denotes place or a similar element as a “Direct Complement/Dolaylı tümleç”, a thinking and creative human mind can conceive of the question: “Is there any “Indirect Complement/Dolaylı tümleç?” According to this idea, the term “Direct Complement/Dolaylı tümleç” can be ignored regarding an “adverb of place” in Turkish terminology. The present terminological forms are sufficient and meaningful. In addition to that, although the expressions “bana, beni” are Indirect Complements, at most it is a delusion or it is
a wrong translation inspired by naming which belongs to structure of English or Western languages. These inconsistencies should not be allowed to continue anymore. In the example above, it can be demonstrated that Tümleq/Complement and Dolaylı Tümleq/Indirect Complement indicates that these components do not serve the function of complementing the predicate from the viewpoint of place, time, aspect, cause, result, grading, etc. and it likewise has a common function with the object in the terms of syntax; the implications of the thesis that “this must be a delusion” must be brought into sharp relief carrying weight to this conclusion. This togetherness can be explained in the following way: if all the elements which form the Complement are discussed in the context of this logic, then they are the elements which seek answers to the questions such as “Where? Where from? Why? When? How?”, etc. This is also the case in English. If attention is given to these issues, although English has many exceptions, there is a formal and phonetic continuity between the question words.

Examples show that an element which has the properties of an individual, human, or person must not be called as Tümleq/Complement when given the function of qualifying the verb or complementing it in meaning. Because the so-called element is a factor which was affected by the work from the subject denoted more than it qualifies the meaning of the verb in the point of function, it must be in the object group with this function and its naming must be reconsidered within this context. It can be called a Human Object. Considering to correct the aforementioned delusion (as Place Complement cannot be called as Direct Complement), we have suggested that, contrary to the rules of English, the term Doğrudan Nesne/ Direct Object (in Turkish) should be used for the expressions (bana, beni/ to me) instead of “Indirect Complement”. When British people call this element of a sentence as the Indirect Object, they may have made a mistake when it is considered in the context of linguistics. When the British people change an active sentence into a passive sentence, they express the subject of the passive sentence in a subjective way which is derived from a human object and they utilize this form rather than a passive form which was expressed by a subjective structural feature of an inanimate object. When they defend this premise in the context of linguistics, they say: “a voice whether it is passive or active, an animate element, is more important than an inanimate object.” So, if the human factor is important in English, why do they call it an Indirect object rather than Direct object? In my opinion, the answer to that question should be investigated separately as the topic of another study. In order to come to some conclusions, let’s examine the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My friend prepared</th>
<th>A banquet for us at his place last night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct object</td>
<td>Indirect Object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complement (Adverb Group: Adverb of place, Adverb of Time)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My friend prepared us a banquet at his place last night. Teacher gave me a book in his room last Monday.

Instead of investigating all of the sentences given above in a passive form, I will analyze one of them because there are no changes in meaning. For that reason I hope to find evidence to support my thesis: an indirect object element of English.

Teacher gave me a book in his room last Monday.

**Passive A:** I was given a book by teacher in his room last Monday.

The “Indirect object” element of a sentence with two objects became the subject of the passive sentence. That is to say that the indirect object with a human component is preferred as the subject in the passive sentence, because this element is a human, so it is preferred to be chosen instead of the direct object which is inanimate. This kind of situation cannot be a point at issue in Turkish, because the order of elements in a sentence is clear and their duties too. These duties do not change even if they are passive. The translation of the above sentence into Turkish is “Ben geçen Pazartesi öğretmen tarafından odasında bir hediye verildim.” Instead of this sentence, we use the following B passive form of the sentence; it is a common and general form in Turkish, but it is a form used less frequently in English.

**Passive B:** A book was given to me by teacher in his room last Monday.

Geçen Pazartesi bana öğretmen tarafından odasında bir kitap verildi.
CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, according to this research study, we may mention the mistakes that occur in terminology during the transfer from Turkish into English. Although “bana/to me” is present in the passive voice, it has a human task component, so it is an object in this human context. For this reason we must not put it in the category of an Indirect Complement, Indirect Object in Turkish. I believe that this is an incorrect transfer of terminology. This terminology should be taken out of the Turkish language and a new term should replace it. Suitable alternatives were previously mentioned in this study. This is my claim and I think that this issue should be discussed by language specialists.

REFERENCES


